**Air cargo traffic in the country**

†3705. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the target fixed for and the actual increase in the air cargo traffic at major airports during the last three years, year-wise as on date:

(b) the reasons for its shortfall, if any;

(c) the estimated increase in air cargo during the next five years; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken specially to strengthen, expand and modernize this basic infrastructure and to introduce automation system to handle the increasing air cargo traffic?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) The target fixed (in '000M.T.) at the major airports during the years 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 (upto February) was 887.91, 948.20, 1013.04 and 1299.52 respectively and the achievement was 1002.72, 1094.84, 1191.52 and 1206.18 respectively.

(c) The growth rate in air cargo for the next five years, with base year as 2006-07, is estimated at 9.1% per annum.

(d) The steps taken to boost up air cargo include installation of modern colour X-ray machines, introduction of automation in cargo handling, implementation of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) systems, introduction of bar-coding of consignments, provision of integrated cargo terminals etc.

**Expansion of air services in country**

3706. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether aviation sector propose to spread its wings in metros and tier-II cities, for market expansion; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, *inter-alia* indicating such cities in Orissa which are proposed to be covered under the above project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Government has laid down route dispersal guidelines with a view to achieve better regulation of air transport services taking into account the need for air transport services of different regions of the country. As such, the airlines are free to operate anywhere in the country subject to compliance of route dispersal guidelines issued by Government.

To increase air connectivity between smaller cities, Government has introduced the concept of scheduled regional airlines. These airlines will primarily operate in a designated region. There are four regions identified as North, South, West East/North-East coinciding with the Flight Information Regions (FIRs) as defined by the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

Government has granted initial NOC to ZAV Air to operate scheduled regional air services for Eastern and North-Eastern region.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.